DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 146 907 IR 005 331

TITLE	If You Want Air Time.
INSTITUTION	National Association of Broadcasters, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	76
NOTE	21p.; Some parts may reproduce poorly due to color of pages and print
AVAILABLE FROM	National Association of Broadcasters, 1771 N Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Broadcast Industry; Community Organizations; *Mass Media; *Organizational Communication; Programing (Broadcast); *Publicize; *Public Relations; Radio; Telecommunication; Television
IDENTIFIERS	Public Service Announcements

ABSTRACT

This booklet of do's and don'ts was prepared to help individuals or community organizations obtain radio and television time for publicity, promotion, or public relations messages. The list covers general suggestions for presentation of the message to stations and more specific requirements for radio and television stations. Proper procedures such as contacting the program director and maintaining good relations with the station staff are stressed, as well as knowing the subject of the message and being open to suggestions on production techniques. Included are sample public service announcements and news releases for radio and television. (JAB)

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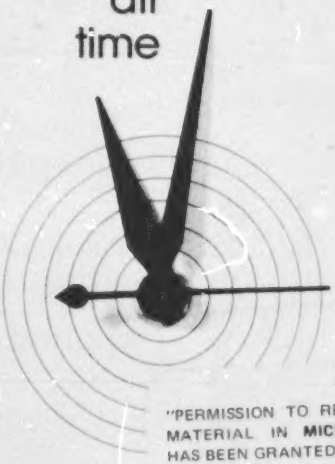
if you want air time



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Carol A. Sommer

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

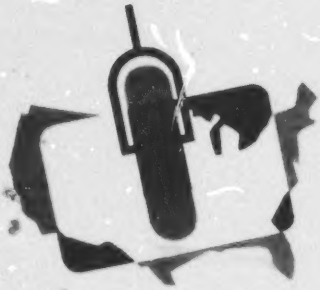
Prepared by the
Public Relations Department
of the
National Association
of Broadcasters
1771 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

IR000531

PUBLICITY seeks to inform . . . to impart information. To be effective, it must have some news value . . . a "news peg" on which to hang a story.

PROMOTION too, seeks to inform, but also seeks to "promote" activity on behalf of a specific program or project. Quite frequently there is no hard "news peg" for a story; merely a desire to get a program under way.

PUBLIC RELATIONS is a combination of the two, plus day-to-day activities designed to build sound and productive relations in a community that will enhance a group's reputation and its ability to serve.



THE broadcasting industry, linked intimately with a vast audience, offers unparalleled opportunities for organizations working for the public good.

Broadcasting is under no obligation to grant time to any specific group. There is no law which says a station must devote a fixed amount of time to community organizations. But stations pride themselves on being alert to their community needs and on their record of service in the public interest.

How do you go about getting your message on radio and television? Like most everything else, there is a right way and a wrong way.

This booklet of do's and don'ts was prepared to help you and your organization do the job properly . . . and to avoid the pitfalls into which many have tumbled.

To be successful, you should be acquainted with the various ways a station can be of assistance. Basically, public service programming falls into two broad categories:

PROGRAMS

Specials: Interviews, panel or group discussions, demonstrations, etc., in either a series or in a one-time-only presentation.

Segments: Similar but shorter presentations inserted as "participating" features of other programs.

OTHER ON-AIR EXPOSURE

Spots: Brief announcements made at various times during a broadcast day.

Personality Spots: Announcements by on-the-air personalities such as disc jockeys, farm directors, or directors of women's features.

News Items: Short stories which are included in regular local newscasts and give briefly the who, what, when, where and why of a newsworthy event.

Editorials: Statements prepared at the station which present the station management's viewpoint on community programs and projects.

A NECESSARY FIRST STEP . . .

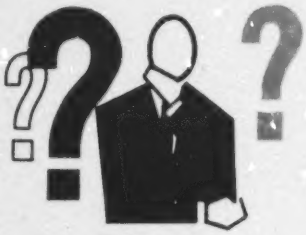
Time and available facilities vary widely from station to station.

Call on the program director (after first arranging for an appointment) and find out if public service time is available and, if so, the types of programming the station offers.

(A few larger stations have special Directors of Public Services or Directors of Community Services. In such cases, you should deal directly with them.)

Here's a good basic rule to follow:

Know your stations and their programs. Listen to or watch local shows first so you will know what you are talking about when you call.



WHAT . . . WHO . . . HOW . . .

If your public service appeal is to be effective, you should have the answers to these key questions even before you contact your local station:

WHAT is your message? Are you sure of the basic idea you want to get across?

WHO should receive your message? Is it of general interest to a large segment of the listening and viewing audience? Can it be tailored to those you want most to reach?

HOW can you best put your message across? Does it have enough general interest for a special program? Would a brief announcement serve just as well?

Your answers on these three questions, particularly on the *WHAT* of your message, will determine largely your success in getting free air time.

REMEMBER:

Public service announcements carried on radio and television MUST be on behalf of nonprofit organizations. No time can be given to bingo parties or lotteries in any form.

OTHER FACTS TO REMEMBER

COMPETITION IS TOUGH . . .

Broadcasters face a tremendous demand for free public service time, and not all appeals can be honored.

Radio and television stations provide millions of dollars worth of time and facilities each year for many worthwhile community programs, but there just aren't enough hours in a day to satisfy every request received. A broadcast station's "product" is its air time, and air time cannot be expanded (like a newspaper) if some extra material turns up.

Remember, too, that you will be competing with many other groups which believe as firmly as you do that their own projects and programs deserve attention.

To enhance your own chances of getting public service time, make certain that:

Your message is important and of widespread interest.

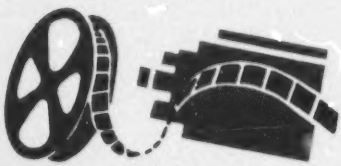
It is presented in the best possible form.

COOPERATE . . .

All types of programming, from 90-minute spectaculars down to brief spot announcements, require planning in cooperation with the station.

Teamwork is the key to success in any venture.

- Be prepared to submit specific facts and workable ideas. Don't waste the station's time on a fishing expedition with vague generalities.
- Accept suggestions. You will be working with experts in a field that probably is alien to you.
- Know your limitations. A 30-minute interview might seem ideal for your purpose, but spot announcements, if well done, are much better than a long program which is inadequately prepared.
- Don't expect radio or television stations to change formats and/or habits just to suit you.
- Check with the station first if you plan an appeal for funds. Many stations have a policy against it.



GO MODERN . . .

Don't overlook the possibility and flexibility of tape and film.

- An interview can be recorded, taped or filmed when it is mutually convenient, then aired at a more desirable time.
- Spot announcements, if recorded or taped, can be aired a number of times.
- If less air time than planned actually becomes available, a taped or filmed program can be edited to fit the available time.

KNOW YOUR SUBJECT MATTER . . .

If your message best fits the format of a program or a spot announcement, you should deal directly with the program or public service director.

If it is a "publicity release" of news value, you should work with the station's news director.

In any case, the program and news directors coordinate your presentation and are the only persons with whom you should deal. It is only time-wasting and confusing if you contact anyone else.

MAKE APPOINTMENTS IN ADVANCE

People who work in radio and television stations are no different from people in other businesses, except that they probably are more pressed for time than most.

Don't just drop in unannounced. Show the courtesy of telephoning first to find out when it would be convenient for you to call.

BE ON TIME . . .

Once an interview or an on-the-air appearance is arranged, *BE ON TIME!*

The clock waits for no one. An appointment or appearance that must be cancelled because you were late, might well be the last one you get.

DON'T FORGET THE VALUE OF PROMOTION

Spread the word among members of your organization and their friends of your radio and television activities.

Publish the time and place of each presentation in your regular publications or in special bulletins. Include the when and where in your newspaper releases.

Announce each event at regular or special meetings, and ask those who attend to pass the word along to other members and their friends.

NOW FOR SOME SPECIFIC DO'S AND DON'TS

DO . . . Submit all program copy to the program director as far in advance as possible. Ten days would not be too soon.

DO . . . Get news releases to the news director as early as you can . . . a week in advance, if possible.

DO . . . Typewrite all copy *triple space* on 8½x11 inch paper, using one side only. Start a third-way down the first page. Leave ample margins.

DO . . . Use a clean ribbon for *legible* copy. Provide extra copies as requested.

DO . . . Put the name of your organization, and your own name, address and telephone number at the top of each item.

DO . . . Give all the facts . . . the what, when, where, who and why of your event. Be sure to give specific starting and ending dates, such as ("Use between July 4 and July 7," not "Monday through Thursday.")

DO . . . Write all copy for the voice—a bit

more informal in style than copy written only for the eye. If you normally use "don't" in oral conversation, write it that way in your script. Use "let's" instead of "let us." A good rule: Be informal, but don't be breezy.

DO . . . Provide a biographical sketch of any person to be interviewed, along with six or eight points to be covered. If the name is difficult to pronounce, give the phonetic spelling.

FOR RADIO

DO . . . Time spot announcements to run 10 seconds (25 words), 20 seconds (50 words) or 60 seconds (150 words).

DO . . . Use simple, descriptive words that form pictures, give dimension and color. Radio reaches only the ear and the listener must be able to sketch in his own mind the picture you are trying to create.

DO . . . Submit several copies of all material . . . and make sure the last one is as legible as the first.

FOR TELEVISION

DO . . . Check with the program or news director on slides, films and photographs which can be used to "demonstrate" your message.

DO . . . Make sure copy written to accompany such visual aids "fits" with the slide, film or photo shown.

DO . . . Time your copy at a slightly slower pace than for radio. Standard announcements for television run 10 seconds (about 20 words), 20 sec-

onds (40 words) and 60 seconds (125 words).

DO . . . Provide one slide or photograph for each 10-second spot; two for a 20-second spot, etc.

DO . . . Keep in mind that slides are preferable in most cases to photographs. They can be made professionally at minimum cost. When photographs are used, matte or dull-surfaced prints are preferable since glossy prints reflect studio lights.

DO . . . Request return of your visual material if you want to preserve it. Otherwise, it may be thrown away.

DON'T . . . Ask for public service time to publicize or promote bingo parties or lotteries.

DON'T . . . Try to use free air time to extol the advantages of any commercial product.

DON'T . . . Plead, beg or threaten in an attempt to get time. A good presentation in the public interest will stand on its own merits.

DON'T . . . Submit copy scribbled on scratch paper or on a postcard. Writing in long hand invites errors.

DON'T . . . Omit essential information. Check over your copy to be sure it tells the who, what, why, when and where, and includes your name, address and phone number.

DON'T . . . Get carried away by trivialities, superlatives and overen-

thusiasm. Omit adjectives and avoid nicknames.

DON'T . . . Abbreviate telephone numbers. "FE" might be FEDERAL or it might be FENTWORTH. Never abbreviate or hyphenate any words in a script.

DON'T . . . Use onion skin paper for on-the-air copy. It rattles!

WHEN YOU ARE ABOUT TO GO ON THE AIR . . .

The station will want you to sound and look your best.

Whether your appearance is live or recorded, you will be given helpful suggestions to that end, and your cooperation will be appreciated.

For example . . .

ON RADIO

You will receive instructions as to:

- The proper distance from the microphone.
- How to handle your copy or script with the least possible noise.
- Ways to avoid extraneous noise, such as removing dangling bracelets, etc.

You also will be asked to caution friends who may come with you to a broadcast or recording session to be as quiet as possible.

ON TELEVISION

Personal appearance will be of vital importance to the success of your presentation.

- Wear suits or dresses of soft, medium colors or pastels. Avoid

sharply contrasting patterns and colors.

- Keep jewelry simple and uncluttered. Pearls and dull finished metals reflect less light than sparkling and highly-polished jewelry.
- Men may require a little powder on a bald head, or if the skin is exceptionally oily. Pancake makeup is advisable for a heavy beard or shadows around the eyes.
- Women should avoid heavy make-up and over-use of lipstick.
- Don't worry about glasses. If your eyes are used to glasses, they will react unnaturally if you try to appear without them. The studio crew will arrange lighting to avoid any glare.

Cooperate with the director and floor managers during your appearance. They may find it necessary to give you hand signals during the show to guide the speed of your presentation.

DON'T FORGET THE VALUE OF YOUR OWN PUBLIC RELATIONS . . .

A good starting point is to arrange with your local radio or television station to provide a speaker for a meeting of your group. More and more stations are encouraging their staff members to speak to community groups and would welcome the invitation.

Such cross-communication can be highly beneficial both ways in the best traditions of public relations.

.... Members of your organization will learn many interesting details about a dynamic and public-spirited industry that touches the lives of every one of us.

.... The station will be provided with first-hand knowledge of your organization which is essential in helping make the community a better place in which to live.

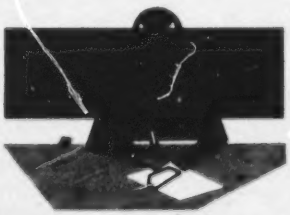
If a station gives you free time to advertise your cause, don't SURPRISE the owner by BUYING a half page in the local newspaper. If you do, the next surprise may be your own when you again seek free broadcast time.

A WORD OF THANKS . . .

After you've made your presentation, send letters of thanks to station personnel in appreciation of the help they gave you.

Such expressions strengthen relationships and enhance your chances of getting future public service time.

Also let the station know of any reactions you receive. The station is vitally interested in the response to your program.



SAMPLE

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR RADIO

From:
Frank W. Edwards
Publicity Director
Randolph Mason High School
Woonsocket, Rhode Island
FAilure 9-0600

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK—RHODE ISLAND

For use Sunday, November 14, through Saturday, November 20, 1976

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK IN RHODE ISLAND
November 14-20

Time: 30 seconds
Words: 74

ANNCR: Drive by a school. Watch the faces of the hundreds of students as they come and go. These are the faces of the men and women who one day will govern this nation. During American Education Week, the teachers of Rhode Island invite you to watch this vital form of freedom in action. Visit your local school and observe techniques of instruction that help prepare our children for tomorrow. This is American Education Week.

SAMPLE

THE SAME ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TELEVISION

From:
Frank W. Edwards
Publicity Director
Randolph Mason High School
FAllure 9-0600

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK—RHODE ISLAND

For use Sunday, November 14, through Saturday, November 20, 1976

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK IN RHODE ISLAND
November 14-20

Time: 30 seconds
Words: 67

VIDEO	AUDIO
Slide No. ..... (School with many students walking alongside it)	ANNCR: Our nation's schools are home to millions of our children for 17 years of their lives. America looks to these future citizens for the maintenance of the free world, and these students look to the great men of the world for some guidance to keep it free. During American Education Week, visit your local school. Rhode Island teachers urge all of you to participate in this observance.
Slide No. ..... (Lincoln Memorial with two children looking at statue)	
Slide No. ..... (American Education week. Visit Your Schools)	

(Note: The blank following "Slide #" is for the station to insert its own identifying number of your slide.)

SAMPLE

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR RADIO

From:

Rose Hill Council
Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
Ms. Dorothy Smoothly
Publicity Manager
259 East 36th Street
Pawtucket, Wisconsin
OVerlook 5-9432

GIRL SCOUT WEEK

Starting Date: 3/7/76
Ending Date: 3/13/76

GIRL SCOUT WEEK
March 7 to March 13, 1976

Time: 20 Seconds
Words: 43

This is Girl Scout Week. This week, the Girl Scouts celebrate their 63rd birthday. It's the world's largest voluntary organization for girls. Throughout the years, it has helped prepare young girls to be useful citizens. Support the Girl Scouts. Help them be PREPARED.

SAMPLE

THE SAME ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TELEVISION

From:
Rose Hill Council
Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
Ms. Dorothy Smoothly
Publicity Manager
259 East 36th Street
Pawtucket, Wisconsin
OVerlook 5-9432

GIRL SCOUT WEEK
Starting Date: 3/7/76
Ending Date: 3/13/76

GIRL SCOUT WEEK
March 7 to March 13, 1976

Time: 20 Seconds
Words: 36

VIDEO	AUDIO
Slide No. ..... (Girl Scout Badge)	ANNCR: This is Girl Scout Week. This week the Girl Scouts are celebrating their birthday . . . their 63rd.
Slide No. ..... (Group of Girl Scouts)	This organization has helped prepare girls to be active and useful citizens. Support the Girl Scouts. Help them BE PREPARED.

SAMPLE

NEWS RELEASE FOR RADIO OR TELEVISION

From:
Handley Music Club
W. A. Mozart
Publicity Director
1357 Lydian Street
Handley, California

For Release:
Thursday, June 3, 1976

Theresa Ann Blakenship has won the five-hundred dollar first prize scholarship award in the Handley Music Club Essay Contest. Her entry was judged best in the 19th annual competition on: "America Needs Music."

Ms. Blakenship lives at 21 Ash Street in Handley. She is a 17 year old junior at Handley High.

Runners up were Edwin R. Newman, 15, of 245 Harvard Street, and Patricia Neff, 16, of 11 Nichols Avenue. Each received a two-hundred dollar scholarship.

Results of the judging were announced at an awards dinner last night by Alice Mae Sa[illegible], president of the Handley Music Club.

Note: The station may be able to use the entire item. If not, the main news is the first two paragraphs.

If any names are difficult to pronounce, give the phonetic spelling. Example: Blakenship (Blay' kinn-ship).

SAMPLE

NEWS RELEASE FOR RADIO OR TELEVISION

From:
The Rotary Club
John C. Corbert
Publicity Director
1632 Warren Street
Monmouth, Missouri
STonecrest 6-4280

For release:
Monday, April 5, 1976

The new president of the Monmouth Rotary Club is Arthur C. Best. He will take office on Saturday, April 24.

Mr. Best, who resides at 435 Cluber Drive, has been active in Rotary affairs for the past six years. He was elected at a luncheon meeting today to succeed George W. Miles whose term has expired.

Henry P. Castle was elected vice president, a post Mr. Best held for two years.

Other officers are Gordon H. Chandel, secretary, and Robert J. Lapham, Treasurer.

Note: Again the news is in the first two paragraphs. The newspaper receiving your release may have room for the entire item, but may have to trim it to fit.